"The Valley of Vision"

By DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH.

THE VALLEY OF VISION is a rather unusual title, so it is an interesting coincidence that it should have been chosen for two volumes of fiction published this month. The first, a collection of stories and sketches, by Henry van Dyke, was reviewed in these pages several weeks ago. The second is a novel by Sarah Comstock.

The novel has a double interest, in the character of its central figure, Marcia Warren, and in its presentation of certain of the problems touching industrial life to-day. Marcia is a rebel who registers stormy protest, sometimes successfully and sometimes unavailingly, against her environments and the conventions that hedge her in. To begin with she breaks all Warren precedent by being a girl instead of the desired male heir, an offence for which her arid father and his spinster sister never forgave her. Even her mother is perturbed by her unconforming babyhood.

"'She doesn't go to sleep when I lay her in the cradle—why doesn't she?' Mrs. Warren would ask in a worried whimper.

"'I don't know, ma'am,' the nurse would reply, shaking her head in profound doubt and looking at the alert dark eyes which were far too much interested in the new world before them to conform to the rules for infancy.

"'And she doesn't like her pretty little rattle with the sweet little tinky bells,' Mrs. Warren continued in pensive reproach. 'See—when I give it to her she throws it away; there—see that!' as the offending toy went hurtling across the room. 'Tan't oo hear ze nice 'itty tinky-tinky?'

"The unconformist heard perfectly, but she was bored. She looked at her mother as if considering whether to reply to this baby talk in contemptuous adult English."

As Marcia develops into childhood she still feels scorn of the unintelligent grown-ups about her, but lavishes tenderest affection on her dolls, which are more than playthings to her and which she dramatizes passionately and insistently.

"One day her aunt called to her, 'Bring the dust pan at once. That doll is leaking sawdust on the carpet.'

"'Hush!' Marcia flashed back in a furious rebuking whisper. 'You mustn't say that so she can hear it. You must say *Annabel*. Don't you know I've never told her she's only a doll? It would break her heart if she knew it! I try so hard to keep it from her!'"

This Aunt Harriet fails utterly to understand the child and is accustomed to administer chastisement with the broadside of an old fashioned silver crumb scoop. She is the subject of Marcia's vehement prayers at times, as "God, don't you let her spank me again; don't you let her, God! *Turn Thou in Thy wrath and fell her with her own crumb scoop!*"

The ardent little rebel finds sympathetic comprehension nowhere. "Some of the older people, more tolerant than the rest, more generous, 'couldn't help liking the child, if she *was* queer.' But they failed to understand her primitive intensity and imagination. Banbury was for the most part too etiolated. To its little girls a doll was a doll, a toy to be coddled but with a literal interpretation of wax and sawdust. Marcia's savage loves and hates and defences and angers were disorderly in a community whose very emotions were as neatly tidied as its bureau drawers."

Later, in her girlhood, when her one friend, Richard, is begging her to go to a party of the young people, saying, "Oh, come along—the crowd won't bite you!" she answers "I might bite the crowd."

Marcia is constantly at war with the sleepy little village and its ideas. She reads thoughtful periodicals and *The Subjection of Woman* at a time when the other girls are devouring forbidden romances. She takes a keen interest in the factory folk in the "hollow," though her father hates the commercial encroachment and commands her never to speak to the workers. The chapters relating to Marcia's welfare work among the factory employees are interesting, apart from their connection with the story, though one feels that more might have been made of them than has been done. Marcia's womanhood is less vital, less dramatic than her early years, and as one closes the book one feels a certain disappointment. The author has not sacrificed reality to the desire for a stereotyped happy ending, but she has failed to sustain the same interest that the early chapters aroused. But on the whole the book is interesting and well done.

THE VALLEY OF VISION. By SARAH COMSTOCK. Doubleday, Page & Co. $1.50.

Verse by Lady Gregory

LOVERS of Ireland and her literature will be interested in *The Kiltartan Poetry Book*, which must be peculiarly welcome to people in this country who are familiar with Lady Gregory and her enthusiastic efforts to keep alive the old songs and traditions and extend the influence of Irish drama. While some of the material in this collection is new, most of the translations have already appeared in *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (in which Synge found "the dialect he had been trying to master"), *Gods and Fighting Men*, *Saints and Wonders* and *Poets and Dreamers*. Lady Gregory says that it seemed strange to her when she began making her selections that the laments so far outnumbered the songs of joy. "Before the month was out," she continues, "news was brought to me that made the keening of women for the brave and of those who are left lonely after the young seem but the natural outcome and expression of human life."

THE KILTARTAN POETRY BOOK. By LADY GREGORY. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $1.25.

The "Modern Students' Library"

By BARRETT H. CLARK.

THERE are signs that the long established practice of making literature a bore to students is disappearing. The old notion that the study of literature must be arduous in order to be effective is giving place to the enlightened ideas of editors and publishers who are now striving to offer students not only the more interesting classics of the past, but the vital works of the present.

Some day perhaps we shall have *The Old Wives' Tale (not* Geoge Peele's!) and *Tono-Bungay, The Man of Property* and *Lord Jim*, "edited with introduction and notes by Prof. Blank, Ph. D.," for use in colleges and high schools.

I remember with warm gratitude two English teachers who assisted at my intellectual adolescence. One of them varied the required curriculum by reading *You Never Can Tell* to a class that ought, according to the regulations, have been looking up the hard words in *Macbeth;* the other flatly refused to force us to read *Burke on Conciliation*, thereby running the risk of calling down upon his head the wrath of the authorities.

Scribners' *Modern Students' Library*, under the editorial supervision of Prof. Will D. Howe, includes fifteen volumes of English classics. More are promised and two announced: *The Essays of Addison and Steele* and Hardy's *The Return of the Native*. With the publication of the last named, the series will include the work of at least one living author. Good! I have high hopes that the editor will see fit to include two or three more volumes by contemporaries.

Without in the least disparaging the classic writers, it is obvious that while they must be read and studied, especially by young students and aspiring authors, the men of to-day cannot be neglected. If you would write nowadays you need not spend your days and nights with Addison and Dryden; it is much more to the point to read Conrad and Galsworthy, George Moore and Max Beerbohm, Barrie and Howells.

From among the older classics Prof. Howe has made a wise selection. He has evidently been at some pains to reprint the great books that have lived not only by reason of their purely literary but their human qualities.

Bacon's Essays, for instance, are attractively edited with sufficient notes to help the reader, but not too many, or too deeply erudite. The *Introduction*, by Mary Augusta Scott, is thoroughgoing and accurate if not actually inspiring. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* it is perhaps necessary to abridge. The work of abridgment and editing is well done by Prof. Charles G. Osgood of Princeton. *Pilgrim's Progress* is worth while having in this edition if only for Dr. Crothers's *Introduction*.

The novels are an interesting assortment. Meredith's *Richard Feverel* has not, I believe, ever before appeard as a text book. It is an easy introduction to Meredith, and ought to be made accessible to the young student. *Adam Bede* is also a good selection; I presume this was decided upon in preference to *Silas Marner* because of the many editions of the latter already extant. *Pride and Prejudice* (with an *Introduction* by Howells), *Pendennis, The Scarlet Letter* and *The Heart of Midlothian* complete the list of novels.

Of poetry there is not so much, only two volumes: *The Ring and the Book* and *English Poets of the Eighteenth Century*. I question the advisability of offering Browning's difficult though magnificent masterpiece to any but trained minds.

Stevenson's Essays, edited by Prof. Phelps, is a first rate selection of the more interesting essays; Carlyle's *Past and Present* and *Nineteenth Century Letters* are both well edited and readable, while the *Selections and Essays of Ruskin* include a brief but representative series of passages on varied subjects. Meredith's *Essay on Comedy* is edited with copious and excellent notes by Lane Cooper.

Prof. Howe's series deserves high commendation, not only because of the care with which he has selected his texts, but because he has induced well known writers, not necessarily university teachers, to preface his volumes: the engaging little essays of Howells and Crothers are literature quite as genuine though not so inspired as the books which they introduce.

THE MODERN STUDENTS' LIBRARY. Edited by WILL D. HOWE. 15 volumes. Charles Scribner's Sons. 75 cents each.

"Literary editors," justly observes Edward N. Teall from Boston, "reviewers and book reporters have criticised publishers for the wraps or jackets in which their books have been shown in the shops and delivered to the ultimate consumer. The Marshall Jones Company will use on its books to be brought out later this spring a jacket carrying no advertisements on its back, but adorned instead with the decorative device of the firm, drawn by Theodore B. Hapgood of Boston. The use of a line or two of descriptive text on the front may be continued, but there will be no billboard stuff." Spare the descriptive line, say we, out of compassion for the Compiler of *Books Received*.